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Fondata nel 1927

CEP Appointments - ASIA/SYRIA - Prayers for the bishops of Aleppo kidnapped two months ago

Damascus (Agenzia Fides) - The Churches of the Middle East unite in prayer to invoke the release of the two Metropolitan Bishops of Aleppo - the Syrian Orthodox Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim and the Greek Orthodox Boulos al-Yazigi - kidnapped on April 22 by unknown kidnappers. On Saturday evening, June 22, exactly two months after the kidnapping, a common prayer will be led jointly in Balamand (Lebanon) by the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch Yohanna X al-Yazigi (brother of one of the bishops kidnapped) and by the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch Mar Ignatius zakka I Iwas to invoke the release of all those kidnapped, and the gift of peace for Syria. Similar initiatives of prayer shared by all the Christian communities will be held in the cathedral churches of Aleppo. This was reported to Fides Agency by the Metropolitan Bishop Timothy Matta Fadil Alkhouri, Patriarchal Assistant in the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch. "We are sad, because two months have passed and we have no idea where they are and how our brother bishops are. We are not sure whether they are still alive, we hope so. We have asked many times to be able to hear their voices and it was not possible. But so far we have not received bad news, and this gives us and our people hope. For this reason we continue to be in contact with politicians in Syria, Lebanon and Turkey, trying to find channels of communication with someone who knows something about their fate". Bishop Matta thanks "Pope Francis, all Christians and also Muslims who pray with us in this moment of sorrow. All this helps us to keep going. On Sunday we celebrate Pentecost in our Churches. We will pray so that God the Father puts his hands on us and grants us his Comforting Spirit." (GV) (Agenzia Fides 21/06/2013).

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